

Newark Hill Academy

Eastfield Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 4RE

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides strong and effective leadership and management. She is well supported by an able leadership team. More staff are now being given the opportunity to take on leadership roles and they do this effectively. The standard of education that the school offers is improving rapidly.
- The trust provides a good balance of support and challenge, and regularly checks on how well the school is doing to help pupils achieve the best they can.
- The leadership team have worked together successfully to improve the quality of teaching to ensure that outcomes for pupils are continuously improving, and are generally good.
- Pupils' attainment is rising across the school. The majority of pupils make good progress over time.
- Early years provision is good. Attainment at the end of the Reception Year has risen sharply in the last two years. Any remaining inconsistencies are being tackled swiftly and rigorously by the effective leader.
- Behaviour is good because it is consistently well managed, and expectations are clear.
- Pupils are proud of their work and their school. They are polite and work well together.
- Most parents are happy with the work of the school, especially the improvements they have seen over the last two years.
- The school has developed the curriculum in line with national changes. It contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Although the well-designed curriculum enriches pupils' life experiences through a wide range of activities, it does not sufficiently engage boys. As a result, boys do not always achieve as well as girls. This is particularly the case in reading and writing.
- Teaching is not always challenging enough for the most able pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not consistently make the progress they should.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum provides boys with interesting and relevant experiences that fully engage them in their learning, so that they always achieve the best they can.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that the work is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils, requiring them to think carefully in every lesson so they deepen and broaden their knowledge and understanding
 - providing more opportunities for the most able pupils to apply, and develop, their skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong leadership of the principal has been instrumental in the school's rapid improvement over the last few years. She is supported well by a comparatively new senior leadership team. Together, they have a good understanding of what is going well in the school, and where improvements are needed to ensure that teaching improves quickly. In turn, this means that pupils are now making much stronger progress.
- The leadership team, including middle leaders, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They are influencing the impact of teaching and learning across the school. They regularly check how well pupils learn in lessons, and over time. Leaders use this information well to review how things are going and where extra input is needed. They have brought about rapid improvements to the rates of progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All leaders set high expectations for staff. The performance of staff is well managed. Areas for professional development are identified and appropriate training given. Teachers appreciate the opportunities they receive to improve their practice and they take on board the advice they are given. More teaching is consistently good over time, teachers feel appreciated, and staff morale is high.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to support pupils' academic and emotional development. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities, including residential visits, to increase their experiences beyond their local community. Pupils visit many places of interest that enhance their understanding of the topics they learn about in their lessons. For example, pupils visit a church, synagogue, mandir and a mosque to broaden their understanding of religious and cultural diversity. Older pupils take part in the trust's 'careers and employability initiative', where pupils visit local companies and have the opportunity to find out about various jobs and professions.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and British values, through the curriculum, a planned programme of assemblies and through interactive displays. Consequently, pupils from different backgrounds and from different cultures feel safe and learn happily together.
- The school effectively uses the pupil premium funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. For example, targeted support in smaller teaching groups and pastoral intervention from the home/school liaison officer ensure that pupils receive appropriate help, and are ready to learn. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress and are now attaining more closely to other pupils nationally. They reach similar standards to the other pupils in the school and sometimes outperform them.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is focused carefully to enhance teaching and learning. Specialist teachers provide high-quality physical education lessons and train teachers to improve their practice. Pupils also have access to a selection of after-school clubs, for example, 'boxercise', fencing, and cheer leading. The school has worked hard to raise the profile of physical education. This is successfully

increasing pupils' engagement in physical activity and encouraging more participation in inter-school competitions.

- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well spent. Regular reviews of progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- Almost all parents who spoke to inspectors said that the school has improved. They said behaviour is positive and their children make good progress. Parents described staff as approachable and helpful. Most parents who expressed their views on Parent View agreed.

Governance of the school

- The trust is committed to working with the school to ensure continuous improvement. It provides effective support to leaders and teachers through the involvement of an improvement partner. The improvement partner rigorously checks how well the school is performing, and the trust provides comprehensive training programmes for staff in all aspects of school improvement.
- The trust is equally thorough in challenging the school to raise standards further, holding leaders to account for the achievement that pupils make, and setting targets to secure improved outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The trust and school staff are extremely diligent in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. There is extensive and regular safeguarding training for all staff, including when new teachers join the school.
- Leaders ensure that vulnerable families have access to the support they need, and that external agencies are doing all they can to support pupils and their families.
- All staff and visitors are subject to the appropriate checks so there is no doubt that the school is a secure and safe place to be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and ensure that classrooms are well ordered and calm. Classroom displays are used well both to celebrate pupils' work and to record key points in their recent learning. Teachers are consistent in managing pupils' behaviour. They have embedded class routines so that pupils readily settle to work and move easily between activities.
- Leaders have developed an assessment system to support pupils in making good progress across a range of subjects. Previous weaker teaching has been challenged, and expectations raised. This has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' outcomes.

- Almost all teachers have good subject knowledge in English and mathematics. This means that they can confidently introduce new skills and knowledge to pupils. Teachers' explanations are mostly clear, and they use subject-specific vocabulary well. Teachers use questioning effectively to ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Pupils respond with well-considered answers. Consequently, most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils with their learning. They are well trained and knowledgeable and help pupils to achieve well.
- Most pupils read and write confidently. Effective teaching helps to improve pupils' skills quickly and to develop a love of reading. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of basic grammar, and spelling and punctuation rules.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of phonics, including those who find reading more difficult, and use their phonics skills confidently to break down words and to help them read.
- Improved teaching in mathematics results in pupils achieving well. Leaders have focused on increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in lessons across the curriculum.
- Good teaching across the school ensures that most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make at least good progress. However, the most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them or is open-ended enough to enable them to think for themselves. As a result, the most able pupils are not always making as rapid progress as they could be.
- Some lessons and teaching approaches do not hold boys' interests sufficiently well for them to be able to make the progress they need to, particularly in reading and writing. Leaders are aware of this and are planning the curriculum to be more relevant and engaging for boys, for example by teaching topics that appeal to their interests. Although this is increasingly the case, there still remain differences between the achievement of boys and girls, with girls performing better.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop good personal and social skills because adults expect pupils to be respectful to others, and to be kind and caring.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are confident and happy to talk to adults. Older pupils enjoy wearing their special uniform and enthusiastically take on the additional responsibilities that are given to them. For example, they apply to be online e-safety cadets, and participate in the work of the school's eco council.
- Pupils understand the importance of doing well at school and the work they do reflects the pride they take in their learning. Pupils work hard to present their work neatly and they take good care of school property.

- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is improving and that bullying is very rare. They say that if bullying does happen the teachers will sort it out quickly.
- Pupils can talk about ways in which they can stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and they know that their teachers will help them with any concerns.
- The overwhelming majority of staff, pupils and parents who completed online questionnaires during the inspection agreed that pupils are well looked after at this school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved because staff have high expectations of pupils and support them well in achieving good standards. Likewise, the school's behaviour policy and procedures are generally applied consistently across the school.
- School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour have been decreasing over the last two years.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and the school is a calm and orderly place.
- Pupils generally work hard in lessons because they are keen to do their best. Pupils only occasionally become restless or disinterested when the teaching does not interest them, or does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions that ensure pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- Attendance is broadly in line with national figures. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are ready to learn. Leaders are successfully reducing the absenteeism of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They achieve this by working closely with vulnerable families and providing support to engage pupils in their learning. Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils by, for example, paying for some pupils to attend breakfast club each morning, and funding enrichment activities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Historically, pupils have not achieved as well as they could. However, school assessment information shows that current pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. Work in books is often of a high standard. Effective teaching means that pupils' outcomes are now improving.
- Over the past two years, there has been an increasing proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1. In 2016, the proportion was in line with the national average.
- Children enter Reception with skills that are lower than is typical for their age. However, because of the effective use of assessment, leaders ensure that children's specific and individual needs are identified early. Consequently, children make good

progress in the Reception Year and are well prepared for key stage 1.

- Pupils generally make good progress in key stage 1. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained at least the expected standard was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils who attained a greater depth in reading and writing was below average, because the most able pupils are not always challenged to achieve the best they can. Results in 2016 showed that pupils were much better prepared for their next stage of education than in previous years.
- Although achievement across key stage 2 has been inconsistent in the past, pupils made much better progress towards reaching the expected standards in all subjects in 2016. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average. Therefore, pupils are now being better prepared to do well in their secondary schools.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made similar progress to that of others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school had diminished in reading, although it still remained in writing and mathematics. However, the school's data for disadvantaged pupils currently attending the school demonstrates that they are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils often attain higher than other pupils in the school, and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support, enabling them to acquire new skills and knowledge quickly. As a result, these pupils are currently making good progress from their individual starting points.
- In all year groups, teachers successfully meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils receive targeted support to help them to improve their speaking skills quickly, for example by checking that they understand new vocabulary as soon as it is introduced. Consequently, these pupils make at least similar progress to their English-speaking peers.
- Across the school, boys do not always achieve as well as girls because lessons do not always sustain their interest. In 2016, in the national tests, boys in Year 6 made less progress in writing than girls. The school's assessment information shows that currently girls are outperforming boys in almost all year groups, in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not always given work that is hard enough to challenge them sufficiently in all classes, and in all subjects. As a result, the most able pupils are not always making as rapid progress as they could to reach the higher standards. In the key stage 1 national tests in 2016, the proportion of most-able pupils working at greater depth in reading and writing was below average. In the key stage 2 national tests in 2016 the proportion of most-able pupils working at the higher standard was below the national average in reading and the proportion of such pupils working at greater depth was below average in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start Reception with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. Most children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen in the last two years; previously it was below the national average. Information from the school, and evidence of children's progress in their learning records, indicates that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development will continue to improve.
- The early years provision is well led and managed by the enthusiastic early years leader. The environment, both inside and outside, is bright and engaging, offering children a good range of experiences in all areas of learning.
- Staff in the Reception classes work together well. They have a good understanding of the early years curriculum. They plan activities that engage children and motivate them to learn. Children's knowledge and skills are assessed regularly and activities are then provided that capture children's interests, and build on what they already know.
- Children enjoy the activities in Reception and behave well. Classroom routines are quickly learned and children cooperate well with one another, for example in learning how to take turns. Adults ensure that children are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are secure.
- Teachers ensure that children have opportunities to engage both in activities led by adults and tasks that they can choose for themselves. Learning areas are welcoming and stimulating. The well-organised resources are accessible so that children can investigate and explore their own ideas. Adults model skills clearly and interact well with children. They encourage conversation and ask questions that make children think hard and explain more. As a result, children grow in self-confidence and develop their communication skills well, particularly the children who speak English as an additional language.
- Sometimes, adults do not ensure that activities for the most able children are challenging enough, or give them opportunities to apply their learned skills and so their progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Staff have recognised that boys do not achieve as well as girls and have worked hard to develop the curriculum to include experiences that will engage boys in their learning. This is already improving boys' outcomes in the early years, and in 2016 more boys achieved a good level of development, overall, than girls.
- The planned programme of visits out of school, and visitors coming into school, extend children's experiences further. For example, children visit the city farm, and the East of England show where they plant their own vegetables. When the police visit the school they teach children how to cross the road safely.
- Staff engage well with children's families. Information is shared with parents frequently and they are regularly invited into school. They are able to contribute to their children's learning by completing home-learning evaluations, writing comments in learning journals, and identifying 'wow' moments at home. Consequently, parents are pleased with the early years provision, and told inspectors that their children settle quickly and are achieving well.

School details

Unique reference number	140377
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10023345

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	499
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Wayne Norrie
Principal	Sonia Kendal
Telephone number	01733 566053
Website	www.newarkhillacademy.org
Email address	admin@newarkhillacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Newark Hill Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school and became an academy in April 2014.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support, or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is below the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, the deputy principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader, newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers, and senior members of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also attended the breakfast club.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 1 and 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from the advisory academy council meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 34 parent texts, and 54 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection, and during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors looked at the 30 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire, and the 13 views expressed by pupils in response to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Stevens	Ofsted Inspector

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